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ABSTRACT

This collection of writings by students in literacy, General Educational Development (GED) and pre-GED programs includes over 30 poems, personal narratives, stories, and brief essays of self-expression on a variety of topics. Many are first attempts at communicating ideas through writing. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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EXPRESSIONS

WORKS BY NEW WRITERS

DISCIPLESHIP PROJECT UPGRADE
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The following students participated in a Selection Committee which prepared this book for publication:

Carlos Areizaga • Tony Cantres
Lisa Haynes • Lisy Padilla
Haydee Rojas • James Sweeney
Phyllis Weldon

This publication was made possible by a grant from Brooklyn Union Gas

FOREWORD

The following selections are by writers in our Discipleship Literacy and PRE-GED/GED Programs. For many it is their first attempt communicating ideas through the printed word.

All are writers. All have a distinctive voice. All have a need to be heard.

I am grateful to Sara, Lisa, Terry, Hector, Carin, Jeri and Cecilia who have been willing to "take a risk" and place writing as a focal point in their teaching. As always, Steve has been an encouragement and inspiration.

Special thanks must go to the students who have taught me so much and have given me more joy than they may ever know.

Joni Schwartz
Program Director

How Many Times

How many times has your heart been broken?
How many times have you cried?
There is no more hurt for there is no need to cry.
There is no more crying for there won't be anymore hurt.
It's over now.

No more anger, no more pain.
It can't hurt anymore. I won't let it happen.
In the beginning, everyone seems like Mr. Right
And Oh, so nice they seem.

They promise you the world, and they make you smile.
As time goes by you begin to know that person better.
And you find that Mr. Right is Mr. Wrong.

How many times has this happened?
How many times has your heart been broken?
How many times have you cried?

Francine Licastro

The Literacy Program

My name is Juan Delgado. I'm in the literacy program. The literacy program is good to learn to read. I know that I will learn to read. I want to be a lawyer. I've been in the program six months. My reading is improving. I have faith in myself. I will be a lawyer someday.

It is hard to come to class. I'm a father of five kids. I have to work to support my family. But I know in my heart that God will help me succeed to be a lawyer. I want to help people – to learn how to read opens many doors to help people and myself.

Juan Delgado

All About Me

My name is Abigail Rodriquez. I am about in my forties. My family and friends call me Abby. I have four beautiful daughters and three are married. I have a short and cute husband, too.

I work with Jewish children in a day care center with children from six months to three years old. The mothers of the children like me. I understand the Jewish language. I sing songs and play games with the children, too.

I'm going to be a grandmother in October, for the first time. I'm happy about it. My daughter who is having the baby comes to school with me on Tuesday and Thursday nights. I come to school to learn reading and writing for my job and to make my life happier.

Abigail Rodriguez

I Still Love My Brother

I always saw my brother on the street corner with his friends dealing drugs to the people in the street. He would always get into trouble. He would always get busted dealing drugs, and he destroyed his mind. He would make money by dealing drugs then he would hide his money under the carpet so nobody would find it.

He was always with his friends on the street corner of 51st. And my brother got caught by the police officers. They took him to the police station to question him. He went to trial, and he told the judge about the drugs. He was guilty. He was sent to Rikers Island.

He always hurt my family and myself. My mother always crys for her son; she feels his life was wasted because he always got into trouble.

I still love my brother very much. He was in Rikers Island for three and a half years. He is coming out soon. I feel happy because he is coming out. I hope he thinks about his future. But I still love my brother very much even after the things he has done.

Abel Gonzalez

I Love Green

I love spring – the color green.
I love trees cause they are green.
I love spring cause it's my dream.
I love trees cause they cover me.
I love life cause of the trees.
I love spring cause it loves me.

The color green helps me think of living life trees.
Without green we can't live; that's the reason we have trees.
Spring is the season that I can smell free cause of the life
flowering and trees.
It's a blessing our trees for our birds to feel free to sing.
I am happy for our green trees.
I love spring cause it loves me.

Haydee Rojas

A Friend

A friend is a person that is special in my life. There are times that I need someone to talk to, or just to be with to share my feelings when I hurt. A friend is so special to have to be a part of my life.

There is one special friend in my life, and His name is Jesus. He helps me through hard and good times. He's #1 in my life forever and could be yours, just ask. He is so good to us that he suffered and died for us. Even though we turn our backs from time to time, he still loves us and waits for us to give what no man or woman can give to us. I call that a good and loving friend; he's my friend.

Carlos Montalvo

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A Cup of Tea For You And Me

Getting up in the morning
opening the faucet.
Putting water in the tea kettle.
Soon the tea kettle whistles,
I put down two cups on the table
for you and me.
What's a cup of tea without me?
I like having tea with you
cause we can talk in silence.
You raise your eyes up in the air
and think what you have to say.
I look down and answer you in
a relaxing voice.
I like that time with you and our tea.
I know how it makes you feel.
15 minutes away
from the world,
for you and me and our tea.

Haydee Rojas

Heavy Winds

I fly and fly.
Don't think I have no worry in life.
Lots of winds up in the sky.

I have to find my feed in life.
I pray for kindness from people who are kind.

I often stand and be surprised.
I thank my God that I'm alive.
It's from crumbs that I survive.

Haydee Rojas

Rose's Secret Is Safe

Rose was a quiet shy girl who never really felt she fit in anywhere. She was tall, thin and had the most beautiful jet black hair, when the light hit it just right it shined almost as bright as the sun. Her eyes were a pale blue with swirls of dark gray going through them. Her features were soft and straight; her skin was creamy white.

When Rose became a young woman she developed a rough hard personality to protect her from hurt and rejection. Getting to know Rose was quite a task, after all she never let anyone get too close. Once you got to know her, it was worth the wait. She was kind, considerate and a real good listener.

Rose had the dreams every young woman had, to one day find that special person, get married and have children. She didn't let herself dream too much because she felt it would never happen to her.

Today would change all that. Rose awoke with butterflies in her stomach and so many things swirled through her head all at once it felt as if she was still dreaming. Just then the door bell rang, it snapped her back to reality. After all today is a busy day, it's Rose's wedding day. Her friend Kate was at the door all ready to help her put herself together for the wedding. They laughed and giggled as Rose prepared herself for her special day.

Her hair was in a loose bun with a crown of soft white roses in it. Her make-up was light and natural; everything was perfect or so she thought. Her brother was right on time to pick her up; they drove to the church together.

When they arrived at the church, there were a few things for Rose to sign in the office. Then it started, the tight knot in her stomach, the nervous feeling running up and down her spine. The priest told her and Ross they were having a mass wedding service and they had to read it. That was it. The worst fear of her life coming to reality. Rose couldn't read. She'd done fine up to now hiding her problem, with her sister's help, but how could she escape now there was nowhere to hide.

She got out of the office as fast as she could. She pleaded with her sister to take her home. She was willing to give up her dream in order to keep her secret.

"Mary take me home right now I can't go through with this wedding", cried Rose, panic all over her face.

"Rose, I'm not taking you home" said Mary firmly.

"I can't read in front of all these people. What will they think of me?" sobbed Rose.

"They won't know anything's wrong. I'll help you read like I always do," said Mary.

"Mary you can't do that this time. Everyone would hear you especially Ross. I'll just die if he finds out I can't read!"

Her pleading didn't work this time. Her sister wouldn't take her home. Rose's sister Mary was always there to bail her out of rough spots like this. She always calmed Rose down at times like this

but it didn't work this time. Rose had to stand on her own.

As she walked down the aisle on her brother's arm, her heart was pounding so hard and you could see fear written all over her face. Rose felt as if her world was coming to an end. When they got to the end of the aisle, and her hand was placed in his she was trembling with fear. They knelt at the altar. Rose began to read; some of the words looked familiar to her, but most of them looked "Greek." Her eyes got blurry, and she could barely see as they filled with tears; she shook and cried as she read. Ross read along with her that made it almost bearable. She struggled through the ceremony and made it. To everyone in church, including Ross, it just appeared that Rose was overwhelmed by the day. Her secret was still safe. As they walked up the aisle together Rose knew she could make it through anything now with her strong handsome husband at her side.

Anonymous

A Life

This is the life of Jose Lao. My name is Jose, and I'm from N.Y.C. I was born in Kings County Hospital, July the 15th, 1961. My mother's name is Carmen Negron. She was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. My real father was born over here in New York. His name is Christine Lao. My family was half born here and half was born in Puerto Rico. My grandfather and grandmother were born in Puerto Rico. I'm not sure where.

I think that my grandmother is about 80 years old. I was raised in a Catholic home. My brothers, Ralph and Raymond, were raised in St. Joseph Home in Peakskill, New York. My mother had nine children.

My father had an alcohol problem so when I was growing up there was not enough food to eat. My father was sharing it with another woman. So my father sent us to a home. My father used to beat us if we wanted a glass of water. He would hit us with the belt and send us to bed. My oldest sister had to go out and steal in order to feed us. She got caught and got a real beating for it; but as we got older, we realized what it is to feed nine kids, and we realized what it takes to clothe them.

My father died in 1973. I believe then we realized what it is to raise nine kids. I don't know if my sisters or brothers ever forgave my father. I learned, even though I was the youngest, to forgive him. I forgave him anyway because he was naturally my father.

Jose Lao

JESUS IS:

Like the star that directs you
as the lion protects and guides his cubs
as the light that brightens the darkness
in moments of confusion and desire to see
clearness; clearness in days of blindness.

Like the gardener who takes care of his flowers
giving love and seeing them grow with patience,
pulling up everything that doesn't let it grow
healthy and resplendent as the first ray of sun
in the morning.

Like the sprinkle of the day break, spraying the
earth with his refreshing dew and making a new day
full of desire to continue living.
Living a different life directed by the stars of Jesus;
as the Lion protects us through His daily life.

Let him be our gardener; the gardener who can
give us love and pulling up everything that doesn't let us
grow spiritually in communication with Him,
spraying His love and blessing with His Holly Spirit.
Like that is my Jesus.

Carlos Areizaga

The Party Animals

I had a dog. Her name was Dee Dee. She was a German Shepherd. When we went out she would always cry because she wanted to go with us but we left her home with Tony, the cat. So imagine what happened afterwards.

She opened the refrigerator door. These two animals they had a party. They ate ham and the chicken. When we got home, my mother came in and Dee Dee was hiding in the corner.

My mother was surprised to see the big mess in the kitchen. My mother hit my dog Dee Dee with the belt. The dog was crying, and Tony was lucky because my mother did not hit him. The reason why my mother did not hit the cat was that he was going to scratch her.

Sometimes Dee Dee would like to play with us, but I did not want to play with her. So Dee Dee took the cat's head and licked his head. That was so funny! They looked so cute, the dog licking the cat's face. Tony looked so cute. His face all wet. He likes to be licked. He use to play with the dog's nose, also. They made me laugh sometimes. They acted so cute together, running around the house making a lot of noises, chasing each other around the house.

One day my brother was teaching Dee Dee how to jump high. My brother was teaching her how to jump over a wooden board. She learned how to jump high; but every time she was jumping she slipped, and she hit herself against the wall. She banged her head against the wall, but she kept doing it. That dog was so crazy!

Sometimes we took her in front of the house to play with the snow. She was so happy that she was running around and fell in the snow. My brother and I were laughing so much that we were getting pains in our stomach. We enjoyed playing with her in the snow. She was eating the snow, too. I loved that dog so much. I miss her very much.

Nellie Velazquez

The Story Of Today

The story we read today reminded me of when I went to the hospital, and I had to fill out an application. The questions were hard; and I tried to participate in filling it out, but I walked out of the office.

Then I went to my home and broke everything in sight. Now, I think I could fill it out. I am not always sure and sometimes I get the butterflies. I know sooner or later I will learn to read and write.

Antonio Cantres

Dear Mom

Dear Mom,

Hi! I know you don't know me because you never gave me a chance to live and breathe. You know, Mom, it's really sad that I never had a chance to play with other kids, or a chance to learn how to ride a bike, or even a chance to take my first steps.

I know it was your choice but I wish it would have been a different one. I could have made you proud of me. I would have made you proud. You'll never know, will you?

I am sorry, sorry you had to go through all of this. I am sorry I will never know what I could have become. Maybe you had your problems but doesn't everybody? I mean, don't you think you could have worked it out?

Mother, do you ever think how I would have turned out? Do you ever picture me in your mind? When you see little children playing in the park, do you ever wonder, "He/she could have been my child?" Did you ever think I could have been a blessing instead of a burden? How sad you must be. You did not even get to see me come into the world.

Good-bye Mother. Maybe you'll think about it the next time around.

Your Unborn Child

Ana Santiago

My School Life

I was a person who did not start out on the right track. At the age of twelve, I did not know how to read or write. When I was in the seventh grade I had a hard time because in the classroom there were more than forty and fifty in one class so the teacher did not have time for individuals. The teacher passed and passed me on to the next and next grade. Before I knew it, I was in my first year of high school; and I did not know how to read or write so I dropped out of school and went to work to learn about automechanics, roofing and plumbing.

Still, the one thing I would like to do is to improve my reading and writing. The place is called Discipleship School. I know that it is going to take me a long time but in this place the teachers have time for me and people that need help to read and write. Thanks to this program people like me and you can have the opportunity to learn.

Nelson Hernandez

Wisdom For Today

People who take other peoples' things
or get over;
they end up in jail,
and don't make it in life.

Willie Medina

A wise girl says "no";
an unwise girl
carries for nine months.

Anne-Marie Santiago

Those who want to learn,
have the ability to teach.

Jesus Collazo

I have one rule:
never make fun of those
who are trying to learn,
because you will learn
from them too.

Jesus Collazo

He who prays in Jesus' name,
He will hear you,
and not forsake you.

Emilio Jiminez

Chances and Changes

Given so many chances. Taking so many risks. Not having a care in the world. Not even myself.

No more emptiness and loneliness. Waking up to reality and realizing life is not a game. It is not to be played with. Not having to worry about anyone ever pointing a finger again at me. Not having to worry if the cops are going to turn the same corner as I am. Realizing that no one can give you the things you want and need in life. No one.

I stopped.

I stopped everything. It took me awhile to realize that the one I really am hurting is myself. Now I know that the hide-and-go-seek game I played with the police has finally come to an end. They warned me and gave me so many chances. I came so close in this game, but not only lost my future but my life as well.

I have awakened from this drug sleep, thanks to close friends who love and care for me. I will forget the life I use to live before and get on with my future now.

My life has changed, and I pray that people out there that are leading the life that I once did will change. There is help out there. All you need to do is make the first move. No one out there can do that for you but yourself. You can't just say you want to change; you have to feel it in your heart and do it. I did.

Francine Licastro

Tragedy In Space

I sat near the television and watched the joy of the astronauts' families and friends when they saw the space shuttle hit the sky. Then the horror! All you heard and saw was the space shuttle blowing up with all seven crew members in it. I, Lisa Haynes a citizen of the United States, who did not know them well and those that knew them, mourn their loss a greatly.

I was alone watching the excitement when the horror took place. I could not think. I cried and cried so much that I had to sit and pray in my room, with my head on my bed and try to get a hold of myself. I left the house to take a walk with a lump in my throat since I had been crying.

To the families of those seven crew members that have been lost in space, I do not know if the astronauts are with God because only God knows that. It says in the Bible that we must be born again to be with God. I pray that you will come to know the Lord as your personal Savior.

To those students that had Christa McAuliffe as a teacher, I mourn this day with you and everyone that loved her very much. We will never forget what happened. Our prayers go with you always. President Reagan is a man of excellence, pride, dignity, and honor. He will never forget the astronauts either.

Lisa Haynes

Dinosaurs' History

I went to the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The scientists told how the dinosaur fossilized in the rocks. These rocks are called fossils.

Sometimes fossils are found near rivers, streams or swamps. One dinosaur kills another dinosaur to eat his prey. The flesh of the dinosaur rots and the bones drop off to the bottom of the water. Layers of earth cover the bones and the flesh falls off.

The mud and sand cover the bones and flesh. The skeleton is preserved for many, many years. The swamps and lakes dry out. The bones are on the bottom of the swamp more and more layers of earth cover the fossils. Most of the year the scientists discover the fossils in the rocks.

One scientist said the Chinese people call dinosaurs dragons. The American people call them dinosaurs because they are big lizards. They ruled the earth before the times the humans lived.

I enjoyed the skeletons of the dinosaurs. I enjoyed the prehistoric horses. They had three toes. I saw a flying reptile's fossil. I bought a new book called *Dinosaur's Book.*

Joe M.

The Long Awaited Trip

My sister and I finally rented a car for the third week of August and drove Upstate New York to the Finger Lakes. My sister and I haven't been away together in many years, since before I was married, so it was very good being with her.

Now that I am going through a divorce I find that I have more time for myself and was happy to make the choice of going with my sister on this trip. I felt closer to her and felt a closeness with her even though we didn't talk about it. It was like old times. We were with each other almost every minute and got along well.

I like being with her because she is a lively person and a lot of fun. She is younger than I am, looks like me and her name is Rita. She has always had an office job but now attends college and is in her third year. I am very happy for her and so proud of her. We are good friends, and I hope our relationship will last for a long time to come.

Anita Goldberg

Shopping for Eggs

Elly was two years old. She was in my mother's room playing with my mother's purse. She found a penny on the floor and was playing with it.

My brother, Jr., came in and was talking to my mother in the kitchen. They were having coffee and talking. When Jr. finished talking to my mother, he left. He left the door to the outside open. I was in the bathroom.

My little niece, Elly, took my mother's purse, put the penny in the purse, then went downstairs. The door from downstairs was open so she went across the street to the local store to buy a dozen eggs with a penny.

My mother looked around the house. She asked me, "Where is the baby?" And I said, "I don't know." So my mother got upset and was yelling around the house. She said, "Go look for her!"

I was so scared. I went crazy looking for her on the street. Thank God that somebody who knew my mother was holding Elly's hand. I went running to her, and then I took her, and I was kissing her. I was happy that she was safe. I took her upstairs, and my mother was so upset and nervous. She took Elly and hit her and kissed her at the same time.

When my brother came home, my mother had a argument with my brother because he was the one who left the door open. "Right now your daughter could have been killed," he said that he was sorry for that.

We were laughing because we were imagining the way she looked with the big purse with her diaper crossing the street to buy a dozen eggs with a penny.

Nellie Velazquez

The Eagles Are The King Of All Birds

I'd like to be an eagle because an eagle flies above the trees.
I'd like to be an eagle because an eagle flies high in the clouds.
I'd like to be an eagle because an eagle has strong, sharp claws to catch snakes.
I'd like to be an eagle because an eagle is the king of all birds.

Willie Medina

Action Park

One Sunday last July, my friends and I went to Action Park in New Jersey. We arrived at 10:00 A.M. It was a beautiful day; the sun was shining, and we were ready to have a good time. We started by going on the racing cars. Then we went on the Tarzan Jump. Then we went on the Cannonball. Finally we went in the Wave Pool.

The racing cars can be driven around a big snake-like track. At the start of the race there were ten cars. We fastened our seat belts. In our cars we waited with anticipation for the light to turn green. At last the light turned green, and we took off. It was great. None of us won, but we had a great time.

On the Tarzan Jump, one acts like Tarzan. One jumps off a long rope and tries to do the funniest dive one can imagine. We all did very funny kinds of dives. Eddie, one of my friends, did a somersault and landed on his back. He was fine but his back was red. If one knows how to swim one will love it just like we did.

The Cannonball is just what it sounds like. One goes down a big tube and is thrown in the air and splashes into a ten foot pool.

The Wave Pool is a big pool that makes waves. This ride is very dangerous. One has to be a very good swimmer to go in the Wave Pool. All these rides are scary but are also very exciting.

We all had a lot of fun that day, eating and going on those rides. My opinion is if one goes to Action Park one will love it. I had such a great time! I can't wait to go there again this year.

P.S. If you go, hope you have fun.

Mike Gluck

One of My Friends had AIDS

My best friend had Aids. He got Aids through his father who was gay. When he was 5 years old his mother did not know it and left him with his father. His father sexually assaulted him. When his mom came back, she found blood coming out of my friend's rectum. At the age of thirteen, he had become bisexual.

When he found out he had Aids, he felt like killing himself. He tried almost everything from: overdosing on drugs to hanging his neck, slitting his wrist, drinking ammonia and jumping off shed roofs. He did not succeed because someone found him every time.

When I found out he had Aids, I was scared. I did not know what to say or do. I was in shock for several days. When he called me or would come to my house, I would ignore him. If he came, my brothers would give the excuse that I was not home. When he called, I would disguise my voice.

After I did all that I felt bad about doing these things to him. I talked to my cousin about what I did. She told me that he would need his friends now more than ever.

The next day I went to tell him I was sorry and his sister told me he was in the hospital. I went to the hospital to see him. They had just taken him out of intensive care and put him in a room. In the last three days, I finally told him how I felt. He said he understood. On the third, I went to the lunchroom to get something to eat. While I was there, I heard the "code blue" signal announced twice on the eighth floor. I said to myself, "That's Sergio's floor." I dropped everything and went as fast as I could upstairs. I was with him. He died on April 19, 1987.

I felt sad for him and still do. When he died, he had pneumonia. On his death bed, he yelled out my name. I miss my buddy.

The memory of Sergio Benitez is still alive in my heart. God bless you, Sergio.

Valerie Rivera

About My Daughter

I have a daughter named Nadia. She is three years old. She has light brown skin, and she is a very pretty girl. Nadia looks like an Indian girl. She doesn't look anything like me or her father. We aren't together anymore. I feel bad because my daughter doesn't have a father to raise her. He comes when he feels like it. Sometimes he buys her clothes. His name is Andy and ever since he met Sally he doesn't pay attention to Nadia.

I just hope he can spend more time with her. When Andy picks Nadia up to spend time with her, he takes her to his mother's apartment. He goes with Sally and forgets his daughter is there. I know my daughter feels left out because she is never with her father. The most important thing for a baby is to see her mother and father together to help her grow up. I know as she grows older it is going to hurt her that her father doesn't pay attention to her. She feels bad because it is like an empty spot that can't be filled unless he is there.

You fathers out there, please pay attention to your children. They don't have anything to do with what happened between you and their mother. Start paying attention to your children before it is too late. Always remember, they need you. Just because they have a stepfather doesn't mean they don't need you. Their little hearts are empty, crying for some of your love. Think about this. They need you.

Maria Velez

The Freedom Side

I like *The Freedom Side* because it's a true story. A lot of people came from Africa to America. Some were royalty, some were regular people, some had children and families. They were called slaves.

There were other people called slave traders. Some were English and Scotch, German and Dutch. The people from the South brought slaves to work on their plantations. They cooked and cleaned. They took care of their children. Some masters treated them mean and some didn't. They picked cotton and vegetables. Some got their freedom and some didn't.

Women slaves had to go to bed with their masters. Some women were traded because they couldn't cook well. The children were sold to other slave traders because they could make more money dividing up families. Their mothers couldn't do anything about it because their masters had what you would call overseers who would beat them if they tried.

Celia Enge

God and Man

God, unlike man, was never created. God always existed. God is, was and always will be. He is creator and sustainer of all things. He is the supreme personal intelligence and righteous ruler of His universe. He is life, therefore, the only source of life. In Col.1:16 the Bible says, "for by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him and He is before all things and by Him all things consist."

These are some of the things God created: the universe, sun, moon, stars, animals, birds of the air and fish of the sea. And God created man, in His own image, in the image of God He created him male and female.

He placed them in the garden so that they could keep, dress and guard it. But one of the main reasons was for man to worship and serve God and have fellowship - to talk and walk with God. Yes, man was able to do all these things with God until man fell.

When God placed man in the garden He commanded them that they could eat of all the trees of the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not to eat of it or touch it. In the day that they were to do this, they would shortly die. Well, that day came and man did eat of that tree of knowledge of good and evil and died. It is like this if you did something wrong and were caught. The judge would have to sentence you to prison or death. Man died spiritually and was cut off from God.

God is a spirit and the only way of communication is to communicate with Him spiritually. This is the reason that God sent His son Jesus into the world so by dying on the cross He became a perfect sacrifice for you and me. He is the way to become spiritually born-again. God made a way through Jesus to bring us back to God so that we can serve, worship and fellowship with God.

Thank-you, Jesus, for coming.

Jackie Hill

FEELING BETTER

I try to tell myself that things are going to work out by my trusting in the Lord and keeping the faith. I have some problems like not working and a personal problem of an illness.

I mean, everyone has their own problems also. I just have to put my hand in the Lord's hand and just give it a little time. Things will fall into place. God knows what I need and when He should give it to me. Because I pray about my problems and what troubles me, I know He will answer me.

JOY

I am not too sure I know what it is. Sometimes I get like a happy gut feeling, but it doesn't stay with me long. I would like to know what joy is, and I like to get that joy feeling. I think I don't know what it is because maybe I never felt that way.

HAPPY

I think I was happy the day I rode my bike because I saw my brother riding it. I could see he was happy and having a good time. Just seeing him ride the bike made me feel good and happy. Then, when I rode it, I felt even happier myself. I can't wait until I ride it again. I even felt happy just starting it up and hearing the motor.

John Clements

God

God is like a big hill and a cold breeze in the morning.
God is like soft white cotton and strong like steel.

Abigail Rodriguez

Wheelchair

One day a boy named Anthony was crawling on the floor because he had a problem with his legs. He was four and a half years old and didn't walk. He started to cry.

His mother and father told him, "Why are you crying?"

Anthony said, "I see everybody walking and I can't walk."

His mother and father said, "Don't worry at all. We will take you to the hospital to see the doctor."

So his mother and father took Anthony to the hospital to see the doctor. The doctor said to Anthony's mother and father that they had to operate on his legs. So Anthony's mother and father signed the paper for the operation.

The doctor did the operation on his legs. He had to stay in the hospital for a week. Anthony's mother and father came back to pick him up from the hospital. The doctor said, "Bring Anthony back to the hospital in three years."

So three years later, Anthony's mother and father took him to the hospital to see the doctor. The doctor took the cast off and did a little exercise on his legs. Then the doctor told his mother and father that he had to stay in the wheelchair forever!

Anthony's mother and father took him back home in the wheelchair. A few weeks later Anthony, who was sitting in the wheelchair by the living room, yelled out to his mother and to his father, because he needed assistance to go to the bathroom. There was no reply from either parent. So Anthony began to pray to the Lord. He cried out in pain to the Lord, "Oh please Lord, let me walk!"

So Anthony got up from the wheelchair very slowly and started to walk easily to the bathroom. A scream came from the living room when Anthony's mother didn't see him in the wheelchair.

Anthony came out of the bathroom and said, "Why are you screaming, Mommy?"

She ran up to him and hugged him and said, "Son, you are walking!"

She then called his father to the room and when his father came out of his room, he said, "What happened?" She pointed to her son Anthony saying, "Our son is walking." Anthony's father hugged him.

Later that night his father and mother took him to the hospital. The doctor took Anthony to the room and said, "Let me see you walk."

Anthony then easily walked the room by himself. The doctor was in a stage of shock because Anthony walked.

He said, "It is a miracle that he is walking."

The doctor told his mother and father that they should put their son to exercise his legs. They

went home feeling happy that Anthony wasn't in the wheelchair anymore. Anthony prayed to the Lord again giving Him thanks for the miracle and the Lord heard his prayer. Anthony suffered before but now he doesn't have to suffer anymore.

Anthony Rivera

The Lord is a Miracle

The Lord is our Savior who will never let us down.
He saved our skin from the demon below that almost took our
soul.

I worship Him with all the love I have inside my heart.
He has won the battle, and we should praise Him while we
still have the chance.

Let Him into your life before you slip away.
The Lord shows us the way through His spiritual love.
Let in some sunshine and see the light: wake up your spirit
freely.

Glory be to the One who healed us from the pain and sorrow.
Accepting His gift was very rewarding to my spirit.
Let this be a lesson to the ones who don't give a hoot!
I was feeling down lately, but I know I should give the Lord
a chance.

He's the One who's in control of my choices and my life.
I know some of us are feeling down right now, but give the
Lord a chance or at least a break.

Don't let life get you down.
(So, please! Let the Lord into your life.)

Maribel Vega

A Letter to You

Hello, I'm James,

I'd like to tell you what life was like for me growing up in an alcoholic family. By sharing my life experiences, feelings and struggles; my goal is to reach others who are searching for security, hope and direction, and to share how I've found peace in my life.

I was born June 21, 1960 in Worcester, Massachusetts. I am one of seven children with four brothers and two sisters, an average family.

The most important thing I remember is my dad's drinking problem. I was ten years old when I realized my dad was spending more time at the bar than with the family. My mom was doing her best to keep things together and because my dad wasn't around, us kids were more restless and more difficult to take care of. My dad often came home drunk and started yelling and ended up hitting one of us or my mom. My dad's drinking caused pressure and problems. So my mom decided to get separated.

My dad never seemed to let us alone and finally my mom met someone else and decided she didn't want to live like this anymore. She told us many times if things didn't change she would leave us and she did. One night, when I was baby-sitting my younger brothers and sisters, she came home when everybody was sleeping, packed her things and left with this man. My mom and I were close and when she left a part of me went with her.

I was twelve years old when this happened; then my dad came to take over and I ran away. When I was caught I told the state I didn't want to be with my father. That's when I went to a foster home. After a year my younger brother and sister came to live with me in the foster home. It was difficult because of the memories, but we adjusted.

One day a year later my mom called the home we were in and I was crying so much my mom said if I didn't stop she wouldn't call anymore. At that point I felt I had nothing to live for. I just decided to commit suicide. I slit my wrists and passed out; I woke up in the hospital.

The next day my foster parents were there asking me if I wanted to come home with them. I was very bitter and said no. From that point on I went into many different foster homes until I was 18 years old. It was real difficult learning how to grow up in different homes. I experienced people in the strangest ways; one time I realized the longer I was in this one home the less food and privileges I got. Another time I was beat up.

When I turned 16 I quit school to work. Money was important, and it seemed when I had money I had a few friends, and could do things. I'll never forget this one home I was in; it was my friend Danny's home. His mom was a Christian. I remember how I felt; it was like that first time I wanted to commit suicide. I was a very confused person always looking for love, attention and acceptance.

I was sharing with this Christian woman how I was feeling, telling her I was tired of all the bad deals and hurts I had in life. I wanted out! Then she told me about this relationship she had with Jesus and that He could help me. She said that He loved me and really cared about me. Somehow

those words penetrated deep in me, I longed to experience what she was telling me.

That day I made a decision to accept Christ as my savior. We prayed together and at that moment there was a deep sense of acceptance, and a feeling that I didn't have to search anymore. I didn't understand a lot of what that decision meant.

In this new relationship, I spent time away from non-Christians. All I did was hang out with Christians, and I slowly shut out everyone I knew before. I got so involved in the Bible; I didn't listen to others. I felt I was growing spiritually so much that nobody understood me and I was beginning to get scared because I started to feel alone, just me and this spiritual experience.

I missed my old friends, and the fun I thought I had. I was so used to being with people in the past and just being accepted meant so much. I started to reach out first to Christians, but I didn't feel they understood me. So I looked for my old friends just to talk to.

Soon my old friends meant more to me than this relationship with Christ. I really was double-minded, soon I was back to the same uncomfortable person that I was before I met Christ. Feeling condemned, because I turned my back on God, I went back to drugs and alcohol.

At that time I was led to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. It was a spiritual program that helped people with alcohol and drug problems and the only thing I had to do is have a desire to give up alcohol and drugs. People accepted me as I was. I got clean and sober and my life was beginning to come back together.

Because it was a spiritual program, I remembered that decision I made for Christ and this one scripture that I read in James 1:8 "a double- minded man is unstable in all his ways." I was living as two people, one wanted my old habits and the other wanted to follow Jesus and His ways. I thought A.A. would be the answer to all my problems, but it didn't fulfill the deep inner needs of my spirit.

I was torn between the two. I felt different and separate from everyone else, no matter where I was. What I was experiencing I couldn't express because of fear of what people would think. I finally came to a point of exhaustion and I cried out to God. I couldn't fight my desires and will alone. It's only through Christ I have the strength to overcome "my old desires." I've realized the world and everything it has to offer me cannot fulfill the longing in my heart. I found that only a personal relationship with Jesus Christ can change me. It's been painful at times, but joyful too!

I've received real love and have true friends now because of Jesus. I even started to reach out to my family and love them. Its gonna take time but I know if Jesus can change me He can change and help my family too.

I hope through my honesty you were touched. What about you? Have you ever felt this way? Are you hurting? Jesus cares about you too!

James Sweeney

FUDGE-E-
FRESH
B.O.A.
B.O.A.
POSSIE
COLD
WITH
ROGER
FUDGE-E-
FRESH
"THE HIP-HOP"
RABBIT!
FUDGE-E-
FRESH B.O.A. FREZ

Graffiti and Rap

Graffiti is a form of art that is done only by street people. The people who do graffiti are called "Writers." They all have a street name. The street name is called a "tag." My "tag" is "FUDGE*E*FRESH." Some writers are usually in a crew. I am the prez. of a crew called B.O.A.

Many people do not appreciate some "pieces" or drawings that are done on walls. For example, the "piece" on Emkay's wall high-lights the deadly use of crack. It is entitled "Crack Kills." Most people do not appreciate it. In graffiti the more you write, the more fame you get. In graffiti you have to know different styles for writing your "tag."

Rap, the "Music of the Streets," is sometimes misunderstood by people, especially parents. Rap is just poetry with a beat. The one reason I think some people misunderstand rap is because of the certain beat. Some people often call it noise.

Rap and graffiti go together like "white on rice." Rap is really the street version of poetry, and graffiti is really the street version of art. The main thing in both graffiti and rap is to become the best, to become a "STREET KING."

FUDGE*E*FRESH B.O.A. in the fullest effect! YEAAHH BOYY!

B.O.A. in the fullest effect for the year of 1988-????

"SLADE L.M. BOY."

ROCK. YEA BOYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY

Raul Berrios

Qualities of a Friend

A good friend is someone to share problems with. A good friend is one who is there in good times and bad. A good friend is there when you need to know someone cares and can share your ups and downs. People need friends.

One quality I look for in a friend is honesty. I dislike people who lie or pretend to be someone they are not. I accept people for who they are and I expect the same in return.

Another important character I look for in a friend is trust. It is nice to be able to turn to someone when your down and you need to talk. A friend will not betray your secrets. A friend can help you deal with your problems. A friend is always there to listen to you.

Kindness is another quality I look for in choosing a friend. I like to think of myself as being a kind person. I feel people should be good to each other. My friend would definitely have to be kind or I would choose another friend.

The last disposition I look for in a friend is a good-natured person. I try to be generous with my friends. If they need something and I have it, they are welcome to it. I like to help people and I feel if each person did something nice for each other it would be returned and life would be a little easier to handle.

Friendship is something I cherish very much because I do not like to be alone. At times I like to be alone but there are times when I really need a friend by my side even if all they do is listen. People with these qualities; honesty, kindness, trust and a good-nature would make good friends. I am proud to say my friends Michelle Santiago and Teresa Llanes, meet these qualities. I feel in my heart there is no friendship like our friendship.

Phyllis Weldon

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